

Whiskey, Whip-its and Reefer.

Chapter -20-

As the dust began to settle in early **2002** my Doctor gave me a diagnosis of "*Post Polio Syndrome*". Suddenly health issues overshadowed everything. I had experience this relapse just as I had moved to 226 Silver Maple Drive in Delaware. It hit me like a ton of bricks. All of a sudden I lost my strength and was so weak in my legs I had to use a cane to keep my balance for walking. Moreover, I was sleeping way too much and didn't have much energy for anything. Also, there was a lot of muscle pain involved. To add to this misery, when ever I came into contact with chemicals, my skin would start to blister and the sores would become infected. I could no longer use soap, shampoo, oil or latex products. Lucky for me that I was in therapy for depression at that point. My shrink help me to assuage much of the stress I was going through. But the situation threw a monkey wrench into my financial picture. Holding a day job was totally out of the picture. I needed to focus all my effort on physical therapy and figuring out how to pay my bills.

When my shrink and I finally fingered out that it was going to take a few years to get my social security approved I began making the rounds at the food pantry and began selling off musical equipment to stay above water. I had no choice. Up to this point, after college, I had always depended on temporary jobs to pay the bills. That game was over now. I've always been a cultural drifter and seeker of the unknown. With this attitude, it had always been a life long struggle to relate the human culture to my idealism. Now, I didn't have a clue how I was going to survive. The only reason this meant anything to me at the time was because work ended. What I didn't understand is the more things change the more they stay the same! Life is my stage; another play, another role, same Squidly, same spark and soul. So I cut a deal with Tommy Jay where he would give me gas money for the 80 mile round trip to Harrisburg, but I still could not make rent or pay for utilities. At the time I needed to keep the music going. Then I got a luck break with the State of Ohio. They agreed to give me a small monthly check and would deduct it from my social security settlement. My doctor advised me that only water therapy could slow down the polio. I had did 15 months of that when I was 7 years old at Children's Hospital.

So I hunted around for a swimming pool. At first there didn't seem any solutions. As humans we tend to measure everything by wins and loss. The YMCA wanted big bucks for a membership. I didn't have it. Somehow, I was lucky and found the *Delaware Hotel* was going to be torn down in a few years and was able to get a local charity to cover the cost of using their pool. That was only a stop gap measure. Another break came when my sister bought me a treadmill. But after awhile the chlorine from the swimming pool started to play hell with my skin. But the currency of life is karma. The choices you make come back to help you or hurt you. I ran across some medical information on the internet that show positive results just by merely walking! So I focused on walking and shifted away from the treadmills. I had worn two of them out by **2009**.

The other source of income was from gigs. It is doubtful I would have survive without the money I got from playing gigs with **Mike Rep** and the **Quotas**. When

the doctors told me I had to avoid Oil, Latex, Ace Inhibitor Medication and Soaps at all cost, I developed work-around to those problems. I stop using soap; started wearing chemical gloves to do the dishes. I washed my hair only with conditioner, showered only with water, and used fabric softer on my clothes. That stopped the blisters. So from **2002** through **2004** I struggle to stay in the game. During this cycle I learn how to do without a lot of things people take for granted in our society. For example, I replaced paper towels with wash cloths. I replaced trash bags with free paper bag from the grocery stores. I stopped using fast food and started to plan all my meals. I would gang all my errands and split my grocery between 3 or 4 store that offered weekly deals. I saved gas and cash that way. This was before people went crazy on the roads. Back then driving was not hand to hand combat or suicidal. Back then nobody was into road rage. Back then nobody carried guns to the grocery stores or worried about Covid. The only real villain was cash flow.

Then around **February** of **2002** the 2nd shoe dropped. The doctor told me I was diabetic. WTF? I didn't even know what that was. So for about the next 4 years I cut back on "sweets" so as to avoid daily injections. The doctor told me to focus on exercise, diet and counseling. On the other hand, the result of all this physical, financial and emotion stress led to a creative explosion with the music. My songwriting game jumped several magnitudes of order from **2002** through **2015**. This had happen once before when I moved to Nashville. Now it was happening again. The discovery of new studio tricks was a joy. I had learned how to fuck the software dealers by marrying digital to tape technology. I discovered a work around to Pro-tool software. I got the results I needed. In most cases it was Superior to Pro-tools. This brought great satisfaction knowing I had out smarted the software vendors who wanted to enslave me to their profit margins. I learned how to sync different time codes or click tracks and marry them to other different codes or click tracks "manually". The process I used is very similar to a band using a 4 count to start a song. The Key is hitting the dubbing start button on the recording machine on the 4th beat. Let say one part is in "3/4" and another is on "4/4". If you can manually nail that 4th beat right in time you get and algorithm or jazz beat. After awhile I had master the "*doing more with much less*" approach in the studio. I became extremely effective in my craft. After writing the music in my mind I would assemble my song parts on computer. Then organize it for mastering. A lot of my printing experience in dark room photography came into play. Also, I spent many years studying the recording manuals trying to grasp what the equipment could and could not do. That was the hard part.

Now let me digress and say a few words about my old friend Mike Rep. For almost 45 years I never understood who **Mike Rep** really was! After Tommy Jay's unexpected death in **2022** Mike Rep's soul or life mission slowly came into focus for me. Over the years both Tommy Jay and I defended Mike Rep to the hilt. But now I am of the mind Mike's retail experience selling records has totally colored his view towards "fame by way songwriting". Mike doesn't write songs because he has too. He write a few good songs in service to his quest for fame. Mike Rep for as long as I have know him is a slave to Self-Aggrandizement. For Mike Rep success depends on being someone he is not. Being a songwriter was never his

goal. Fame has always been his goal and his best work has always been parody and folk songs. And he milks the public relation side of the craft hard. Working at a record store means that if the sales are not happening then your survival is threaten. So as a salesman you become astute in subtle manipulation of the taste of your customers. For Mike Rep that means buying the things that he likes. When that happens Mike Rep is very generous with his customers. But, when it doesn't happen Rep tends to snub the customer's tastes behind their backs. Subconsciously, I think Mike is more concern about being of service to himself, and if the customers agrees, then that is the highest form of perfection that he'll ever achieve. I think it very common in the vinyl record store industry to become snobbish. That is, "*vinyl heads tend to become egocentric people*". Sometimes they become all about their vinyl collections. It's even worst if the sales person is songwriter or poet. Moreover I think, subconsciously this snobbish attitude is a form of Self-Aggrandizement meant to force others to obey their tastes. It appears to me that the baseline for vinyl sales is giving the customers what they want; but also, hopefully introducing them to new and unfamiliar things. This is a good thing until it becomes "*all about manipulation by force of will in quest of your ego satisfaction*". Its a question of service to others (vs) service to yourself. And herein lies the rub of the matter. Over the years I've have notice a pattern in Mike Rep, and many others, in using manipulation to be of service to themselves. It is not really about mastering your craft, it has more to do with "*public recognition*". If Mike would have put more zeal into his craft and less into public recognition he could have been on the same level as Jim Shepard as a writer. Especially, in regards to his musical heroes. Both Mike Rep and I are common garden variety musicians of the great unwashed sort!

It is great if the transaction is mutually beneficial to the salesman and customers. But if it is stealthy and one sided, it leads to bad feelings on the part of the "aware customer". This has generated critics of Mike Rep who see through his bullshit. Mike does not seem to be able to understand his need for revenge toward those who confront him on this issue on non-mutually beneficial transactions. From where I sit Mike is a master at getting others to use their resources to do his bidding. There is nothing wrong with that approach, however, at the end of the day it is a zero sum life game. Its about what you give not what you take. My point is that it is better to give with no exception of getting something in return. That is, it is all about being of service to others, not service to your self. This is the life lesson I think Mike Mike Rep and others songwriters have missed. This is the most difficult of life lessons. Learning how to keep the "give and take" in balance is not for the faint of heart.

From 2002 until his death in 2022 Tommy Jay had a number musical projects:

Mike Rep & The Quotas

(2002-2013 Mike Rep, Tommy Jay, NS, Johnny Furnace)

The Whales

(2001-2019 Tommy Jay, Ted Lust, Johnny Furnace, Carla Lust, Jerry Felty, TAL, NS, Terry Devin, Mike Rep.)

Tommy Jay Jay's All Stars

(2010 -2013 Tommy Jay, Ted Lust, Johnny Furnace, Carla Lust, NS, Justin Burkett, Rich Johnston).

Root Cellar,

(2002-2010 CEC, NS, Tommy Jay, Hippy Dave, Adam Smith)

The Bugmen 1

(2013-2014 Tommy Jay, NS, Rich Johnston, Justin Burkett, Ted & Carla Lust, Johnny Furnace

The Bugmen 2

(2015-Tommy Jay, Rich Johnston, Kevin De Broux, NS)

The Bugmen 3

(2016-Mike Rep, Tommy Jay, NS, Kevin, Rich Johnston)

JayFish

(1987-2022)

Tommy Jay's Freak Show 1

(2013-2014 Tommy Jay, NS, Rich Johnston, Johnny Furnace, Annie Lobo, Terry Devin, Bree Frick.)

Tommy Jay's Freak Show 2

(2014- 2016 Tommy Jay, Rich Johnston, Fritz Kappler, Johnny Furnace, Annie Lobo, Bree Frick.)

In **February** of **2001** the 1st version of **The Whales** was born. It grew out of the Harrisburg clan's need to make music. Tommy Jay was the heart and soul of Harrisburg music at the time. This included **Johnny Furnace** on steel pedal/vocals/guitar, **Ted Lust Lust**/harp/guitar/vocals, **Tommy Jay**/guitar/vocal, and **NS** on synth/vocal. During this time we would spend 2 or 3 days a week working in the Tommy Jay's Barn preparing for shows around town. Sometimes even **T.A. Lafferty** would do a show or two with us. I think the Whales came about because **Johnny Furnace, Ted Lust** and **Tommy Jay** wanted to make music without Mike Rep hogging the situation. By that time everybody at the barn knew how Mike Rep rolled. I think Mike Rep, at that point, really didn't want Tommy Jay playing music with anybody else. This led Tommy Jay & Ted Lust, who were eager to step into the spotlight, to push for shows without Mike Rep. During this 1st version of the **Whales** Tommy Jay & I wrote the Jayfish song. "**What Does The Little Green Man Want**". It was a spontaneous take and Tommy Jay was really pleased. The spontaneous thing was something that Jim Shepard and I had mastered back in to mid-1980s with V3. So it was old ground for me.



Later, around **2005** the 2nd version of **The Whales 2.0 evolved**. This saw **Carla Lust** joining on congas/vocal. By then Tommy Jay would allow Mike Rep to occasionally sit in on bass/keyboards/guitar/back up vocals. Also, by that time the Quotas were doing 3 or 4 shows a month so Mike Rep didn't need to be so controlling of Tommy Jay's side projects. Then on down the road around **2006** to **2009** the 3rd version of the **Whales** saw **Terry Devin** joined on vocals. During this period Tommy Jay, Ted Lust, Johnny Furnace, Carla, Terry, Rep and me would try to sing harmonies. At certain points Tommy Jay would book shows as "*Tommy Jay Jay's All Stars*" but mostly it was the Whales with Mike Rep on Keyboards. Also during this period **Mike Rep** felt comfortable enough with the situation to become a sideman for Tommy Jay and Ted Lust. It was during this cycle that Mike Rep and Tommy Jay started doing duet shows in Austin and Chicago.

So Mike Rep took over synth once I switched over to Mandolin. **The Whales** went through a total of 3 personnel line ups over the years. Some times even **Jerry Felty** would play guitar or bass on a few gigs. But by **June** of **2002**, Mike Rep had establish the **Quotas** as the number one act in Tommy Jay's barn. Up to this point the Quotas where playing mostly at *Bourbon Street Cafe*, *Bernie's Bagels* and the *Kara-bar*. When the Quotas did a gig in Cleveland on August 31st 2002 it seemed to open doors later on in Louisville and Nashville. Also in the summer of 2001 **Root Cellar** was born.

Tommy Jay use to pester me about doing Root Cellar gigs. So on **December 15th 2001** at Larry Bar **Root Cellar** did its 1st show. Roxanne Newman even showed up. This was the last time I ever saw my friend & sister Roxanne. Later that year Roxanne and CEC got into a dispute over Hippy's Dave's LP Cover for "*Matter Dominates Spirit: A Tribute To Jim Shepard*". At first Roxanne had happily approved the project but later she changed her mind when she saw Hippy Dave's artwork. Their conflict led to a lot of bad blood between the members of V3. Most of our musical friends choose sides in the conflict. The family claimed total control over the V3 catalog and I disputed that claim. A lot of the songs I wrote Jim didn't give me credit for. Family Promises to me were never kept. Money was owed and never paid. I can honestly say that it was Charles Cicirella who inspired a resurgent in Jim Shepard's art after his death. Most of Jim Shepard's music ended in the dumpster anyway. So it was an unnecessary conflict. But I will let the historians sort that mess out.



Like I said before there where 3 version of Root Cellar. The first version was Tommy Jay/drums. NS/bass. Hippy Dave/guitar. And Charlie Cicirella on vocals. Tommy Jay just could not get enough of Charlie Cicirella and Hippy Dave. Unlike the Quotas **Root Cellar** didn't have any real songs. We had a set of improvisations where **Hippy** and **Charlie** would preform outlandish antics on stage while Tommy Jay and I would hold the bottom. It was great fun. The 2nd version of **Root Cellar** was Tommy Jay/drums. Hippy Dave/guitar/vocals. Adam Smith/guitar. NS/bass. And Charlie Cicirella/ vocals. I was surprised that **Adam Smith** would want to join in our Root Cellar madness. Adam along with

Benjamin Holesapple, and **Sean Wright** had founded **Columbus Discount Records** in 2004. Adam seemed to be very organized as a producer/engineer/musician. His band **Necropolis** (**Adam Smith, Benjamin Holesapple, Bo Davis, Emily Davis, Kyle Heiberger, Mat Bisaro**) were very tight on stage. Also, Adam worked as an engineer at Musico Studio and had produce our 1st Mike Rep and the Quotas CD. So I was really curious about his attraction and involvement with Root Cellar. But Adam fit right into the non-stander approach of live jamming on stage. Finally, *The 3rd version* of **Root Cellar** saw **Hippy Dave** bow out which left Tommy Jay/drums, Adam Smith/guitar, NS/bass, and Charlie Cicirella/vocals. This was just before Adam left Musico Recording Studio as an engineer and closed down his CDR Record label by moving to Austin Texas. As best as I can tell **Mike Rep and the Quotas** lasted from early **2002** till late **2013** with the last gig being in **Ted Lust's** garage. There were a few years during this time where Mike Rep's legal troubles kept him away from making music in the barn. So Tom and I focused the **Bugmen** to fill in the gap. But after the coast was clear Rep returned to the Barn and picked up where he had left off by joining the **Bugmen**. That's the Mike Rep way. He is a moonshine kind of country folk.

Lynn Whitacre-Cart and *Cloud Tiger* had broken contact with me from 1999-2002. From that **January** till **Aug 8th 2002**, I tried to repair friendships with both women. No luck. They both had helped me to heal from Jim Shepard's death back in 1998. So I sent letters to them both explaining my Hanky Panky actions. Sadly any trust they might have had in me was destroyed. That was a good thing. I needed space alone. I needed to sort things out. Yet, they both seemed to be open to staying friends. I'm still not sure why? I had nothing to offer. To say I was conflicted about "them" is an understatement. In fact, I have found out over the years that ET women are easier to deal with than human women. They are much better at give and take. So, I didn't expect a response from either of them. I may be wrong, but it seemed from **1999** to **2002** they had both acted like they wanted some sort friendship. Yet when I pressed them they said they didn't want that. I had went to social events and shopping trips with both of them. I enjoyed hanging out with them. I felt like we were buddies. From **1999-2006** it was "on and off" depending on who was more receptive to my advances. I guess, at that point, I just needed someone to care about me. They both seem to be sympathetic to my hurt about Jim Shepard.

To be fair, I started courting Lynn first. When She rebuffed my advance I decided to make her jealous by courting Leslie. Bad Idea. Slowly as Lynn pulled back from my disloyalty; I started having feelings for Leslie. As I began to consider how to invest my life force, time and money they both up their game by "Bread-Crumbing" me with hopes of commitment. Because I though I deserved more; and because they both said they felt nothing other than friendship for me, I kept pin-ponging back and forth between them. Bad idea! This was before my 10 years of therapy where I was able to understand my role in the insane drama. In therapy a lot of nasty childhood issues pop up and I was forced to heal them. It wasn't until **2008** that I was able to see what I was offering. I had no money, no security and health issues to boot! I had nothing. Leslie expected a good

"Jewish" man, and Lynn didn't want another burden in her life. She was trying to "rear" a kid alone. I'm glad I didn't end up as a father figure for Lynn's kid. I had blew with my own kids. She saw that an didn't wanted no part of it! What I wanted was a fair and balanced relationship but at the time all three of us had serious baggage to unpack. Simply put, I had a unstable childhood and health issues to overcome. Lynn had seen her husband die and Leslie had issues with her dad. Neither felt ok about things. Me? I just wanted a friend who would love me unconditionally. I ended up with that when I unexpectedly stumbled into the ET Breeding Program. Which is different story altogether. To this day I don't understand what the ET females had seen in me? But I'm sure it has nothing to do with money or social status. It must have to do with my heart. They must have see something in me that Lynn or Leslie overlooked? To this day the 8 ET females say it has to do with unconditioned divine love. They value that more than wealth, status or sex. Neither Lynn or Leslie where up for that challenge! So this 3 way situation between Lynn, Leslie and Me stumbled off and on until **July 2006** when I finally gave all of my "whole heart" to Lynn and sadly let Leslie go permanently. But Lynn wanted nothing to do with me so I just rolled on like Bob Dylan does when women blow him off.



On **Aug 8th 2002** Lynn sent me a letter. Boom! At first she ripped my ass pretty hard but then said she was glad to be my friend again. She said she was sad and disappoint about our friendship. But she was happy that I was seeing a shrink. I don't think she really gave a shit one way or another about it! Lynn was just trying to be kind. That is the way she is. So from **August 2002 till October-2006** I thought I could repair the friendship. Dumb Idea! But for some reason I was under the impression that a few of her friends didn't want us to get close again. Not sure what to make of that? So by **October 2006** Lynn and I had called it quits second time. We both wanted off the roller coaster. I will admit it was a ruff transition moving on from her. I had many conversations with my shrinks about it. But we decided to focus on my childhood, economic and health issues.

At the time I was pushing hard to get my social security approved which finally happen in **2004**. When it happened I felt a enormous wave of relief from the economic stress I was constantly under. I was finally free to rebuilt the kind of life style I wanted. To make that happen I had hooked up with "grumpy" **Doctor Calkins**. He like to rub it in that I was his "poor" client. He seemed money nuts to me? I had to put up with his insults about my food stamp status and poverty. At the time I met him he was about 80 years old. Calkins had no business doing medicine at that point. He should have retired at 65 but he didn't. When he started to make "health mistakes" with his clients the powers that be swooped in and forced him to retire. He blamed me for his business troubles! Then the crazy old bastard refused to give me my health records. He demanded for \$25 xeroxing and postage. When my new doctor hear that, she made him return my records free of charge. Two weeks later the big wigs forced him to retire. Old Man Calkins went out of business. The head of the hospital he worked for show up during one of my appointments and drop the bomb he "*had to retire*". Calkins was pissed off! It all went down before my eyes in the exam room. He must have

thought I turned him into the medical board. I didn't. I had nothing to do with it. I found out much later what happened. He kept fucking up! But I was glad to get away from him. The dude love to do rectal exams a lot. WTF? I think he enjoy it as a joke. I sure didn't! Let my ass alone pal!

On **June 27th 2002**, in Las Vegas **John Entwizle** of the **Who** O.D. on drugs. It was interesting because I always thought he was the most stable of the "*Who*" clan. Entwizle's death drove home what Jim Shepard use to tell me; "*We come and do our work; then we go*". Back in my V3 days I used to pattern my bass sound after John Entwizle. I tried to play lead bass like Entwizle. He had such a powerful right hand that ran rings around the Rhythm guitar. But to be honest I never had the speed to pull it off. I spent the rest of 2002 doing gigs with Mike Rep and the Quotas and trying to adjust to the pressure of my health issues. Anyway, at the time, I think the reason it was call Mike Rep and the Quotas was because Rep had the worst behavior ego wise. He could be very bossy and dictatorial at times. And him and Tom did come to "*blows*" a few occasions. Me, I took a different approach to Rep. When he started in on me I would not say a word. I had learned how to cut a "*crusty*" in silence. Rep would often blame Tom or Tim for my crimes. Sometimes it would take a minuet for the odor to reach Rep. I love the suspicion and confusion on his face when got a good and proper dose of "*Old Brake Wind Squidly*". It was a defense technique I had master over the years. Very handy. It proved very effective in shutting Mike Rep up. It distracted him. Great technique. Fuck with the Squid you get the skunk!

The year of 2002 saw the release of 6 projects for me: "**The Ultraviolet Catastrophe**". "**Flapdoodles**" & "**Objects**". Also a collaboration with Hippy Dave on "**Appearance Of The Magi**". And **Steve Zimmerman's** New Jersey compilation on **Orange Entropy Records** called "**Effectaphobe**". Add to this "**I'm a Lover**" by **Papparatt**. With all the social, medical and economic turmoil I was forced to focus more on my songwriting. I think these six project support the notion that when things get bad creative people tend to become more focus on their art. Then news broke that **Phil Spector** had murdered **Lana Clarkson** in **February** of **2003**. All of a sudden Spector music career was over. Spector had been a huge force in pop music landscape of the 1960s. How he lost it and ended up in jail is a cautionary tail for all who dare to make a living off their art. Sometimes the fame & drugs mixture leads to very bad choices. All his hard work and success ended in a rash of passion. **Spector** reminded me of **Jim Shepard**. The same thing happen to Jim. Once you make it then keeping it together is a bitch. I took note of this.

In the mean time President **George Walker Bush** had invaded **Iraq** on the pretext of "*weapons of mass destruction*". The whole thing stunk of revenge. **Saddam Hussein** had tried to kill his dad. So **Bush** and **Cheney** made numerous public statements alleging Iraq possessed "*weapons of mass destruction*". They claimed that Hussein was hiding nukes in Iraq. So this was Bush's pretext for invading Iraq. But the peace movement was pushing back. To stop the peace movement Bush and Cheney turned to dirty tricks. So, on July 14, 2003, **Robert Novak**, a journalist for The Washington Post, used information obtained from **Richard Armitage**, **Karl Rove**, and **Scooter Libby**, to reveal Plame's identity as a CIA operative in his column. Legal documents published in

the course of the CIA leak grand jury investigation established her classified employment as a covert officer. **Bush** blew **Valerie Plame** cover when her husband had proved that "*Iraq had no nukes*". I was deeply disappointed that the **Obama** administration failed to take Bush to court for the grievous harm inflicted on **Joe** and **Valerie Wilson** and the nation. Bush had gotten away with mass murder just to satisfy his need for revenge. This was long before **Trump** tried to overthrow an election by way of an insurrection. As 2002 came to an end I grew more depressed. **Bush Jr.** was making plans to launch the 2nd gulf war. This created a never ending mess. Many humans died needlessly. The 2nd Iraq would last from **March 20, 2003** to **December 15, 2011**. When I had got wind that Bush was planning something big for March of 2003, it was too late. Bush would have his way. So I sunk deeper into my depression. At the time suicide seem like to only way out. But fate works in very strange ways! Everything would change in 2003 for the better. It is a wonder I survive at all. The truth is that we think we control our own life's but there are higher beings behind this great illusion that are pulling our strings. Most of us don't get that. The ones that do; that tend to get it, suffer less over the course of their life cycles. Me, well I just wanted to have fun and not hurt anybody. And, If I can help, that's great! I had always believed that if knowledge is our sword then compassion, forgiveness and unity are our shield. So as 2002 came to an end, things looked pretty bleak for the squidster. The war was beginning and the world was addicted to big oil. Everyone judge you by how much money you had. It was something I could never accept no matter how much the world demanded.